

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 052501
ORIGIN SS-25

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P 092210Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 052501

STADIS////////////////////////////////////
EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR FROM DRAPER

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1 LINE 1 OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SY

SUBJECT: VISITS OF SHALOM AND CHABOT

REF: DAMASCUS 1483

1. WHILE I SHARED YOUR THINKING WITH SHALOM AND REPRESENTATIVE SOLARZ, THE TWO MEN HAVE DECIDED TO PROCEED TO SYRIA. THEY WILL DEPART NEW YORK ON PAN AMERICAN AND ARRIVE IN DAMASCUS ON SUNDAY. THEY WILL STAY AT THE MERIDIAN HOTEL. SHALOM WILL GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. HE IS GOING TO TAKE HIS TIME WITH THE COMMUNITY IN DAMASCUS, BUT HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW HE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO GO TO ALEPPO AND QUMISHLI.

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2. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH SOLARZ, SHALOM PREFERS THAT YOU NOT NOTIFY SYRIANS THAT PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IS TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR RABBI HECHT'S GROUP. HIS BASIC PURPOSE -- AS EXPLAINED TO THE SYRIAN AMBASSADOR HERE -- IS TO BROADEN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO JEWISH COMMUNITIES. BOTH MEN PUT ON THEIR VISA APPLICATIONS AS REASON "TOURISM AND VISITING JEWISH COMMUNITY." QABBANI

ISSUED THE VISAS ON THREE DAYS' NOTICE.

3. SHALOM IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION IN THE COMMUNITY. HE

IS A GO-GETTER AND IS INVOLVED IN MANY JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE AND WILL BE WORKING WITH THE SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY. HE HANDLES THE REMITTANCE OF ABOUT DOLLARS 20,000 PER MONTH TO THE SYRIAN COMMUNITIES. HE IS ALSO VERY PERSONABLE.

4. CHABOT WAS ACTUALLY BORN IN ALEPPO IN 1909, BUT APPARENTLY DID NOT REMAIN THERE LONG.

5. WE HAD AN EXTREMELY USEFUL SESSION ON MARCH 8 WITH JEWISH LEADERS ABOUT TECHNICALITIES IN VISAS AND IMMIGRATION PRACTICES. EVEN ASSUMING THE SYRIANS AGREE TO GIVE PASSPORTS FOR PEOPLE WISHING TO PAY "VISITS" TO THE UNITED STATES, IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE OR APPROPRIATE FOR EMBASSY DAMASCUS TO GIVE ROUTINE VISITORS VISAS. HIAS REPRESENTATIVE PROPOSED A PRE-PAROLE PROCEDURE UNDER WHICH STRANGERS WOULD GET VISITORS' VISAS TO THE U.S. AND ON ARRIVAL IN THE U.S. WOULD BE GIVEN IMMIGRANT STATUS. THERE ARE OTHER WRINKLES WE ARE EXAMINING AND WILL TRY TO GET BACK TO YOU WITH DETAILS AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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